

Message Text

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14

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

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R 221043Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3497

INFO AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY PARIS

CONFIDENTIAL LONDON 09646

E. O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, PDEV, NP

SUBJECT: DISCUSSION WITH BRITISH ON NEPAL

1. AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE CARGO AND NEW DCM QUAINTON HAD FRIENDLY DISCUSSION WITH SUPERINTENDING UNDER-SECRETARY WILFORD AND SOUTH ASIAN DEPT. HEAD CHALMERS AT FCO AUGUST 17, COVERING LARGELY FAMILIAR GROUND.

2. BRITISH OPINED THAT RECENT EVENTS AFFECTING SIKKIM (BOTH THE OVERTHROW OF ROYALTY AND THE INDIAN ROLE) HAD MADE IMPRESSION FOR A TIME IN NEPAL, BUT NEPALESE HAVE RELAXED SINCE, RECOGNIZING DIFFERENCE OF THEIR OWN STATUS AS WELL AS NEPAL'S HIGHLY DEFENSIBLE PHYSICAL POSITION.

3. WILFORD OPINED IT WAS A GOOD THING THAT KING HAD DECIDED INDEFINITELY TO POSTPONE ENORMOUS EXPENSE OF PROPOSED CORONATION. THERE FOLLOWED A GENERAL DISCUSSION ON NEPALESE DEVELOPMENT AND THE EFFECTIVENESS OR INEFFECTIVENESS OF NEPALESE BUREAUCRACY. WHILE AGREEING WITH CARGO THAT THE GENERAL VIEW AMONG SCHOLARLY EXPERTS IS THAT NEPALESE BUREAUCRACY IS RELATIVELY SKILLED AND SOPHISTICATED BY SOUTH ASIAN STANDARDS, CHALMERS REPORTED CONTRARY VIEW AS HAVING BEEN EX-CONFIDENTIAL

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PRESSED BY CONFIDANT OF THE KING AT RECENT ANTHROPOLO-

GISTS' MEETING IN LONDON. CHALMERS HOPED THIS DID NOT MEAN KING HAS GIVEN UP TRYING TO USE BUREAUCRACY. THERE WAS GENERAL AGREEMENT THAT, HOWEVER ABLE HIGH NEPALESE OFFICIALS MAY BE INDIVIDUALLY, THE NEPALESE GOVERNMENTAL SYSTEM (CONTROLLED BY THE KING) DOES NOT SEEM TO HAVE BEEN MAKING VERY EFFECTIVE USE OF THEIR TALENTS.

4. ALSO INTERESTING THAT BRITISH GURKHAS CURRENTLY NUMBER ABOUT 8,700, THOUGH CHALMERS SAID BRITISH ARE TRYING TO TRIM BACK TO AUTHORIZED CEILING OF 7,500.
5. WILFORD (WHO IS DUE TO TAKE OVER AS SENIOR SUPER-INTENDING UNDERSECRETARY FOR ASIA FROM SIR ERIC NORRIS IN MID-SEPTEMBER) TOLD US HE HOPES TO MEET IN WASHINGTON AROUND SEPTEMBER 24 WITH USG OFFICIALS ON SOUTH ASIA AS WELL AS ON EAST ASIA AND SEATO. BRITISH EMBASSY WILL BE CONTACTING DEPARTMENT.

SOHM

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